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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000692

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [NL](#) [KAWC](#) [ICTY](#) [SR](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/SERBIA: "CONSTRUCTIVE" APPROACH

REF: THE HAGUE 674

Classified By: PolEcon Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons 1.5(b,d)

(C) The Dutch are easing their opposition to closer EU ties to Serbia. In a November 11 debate in the Dutch parliament, FM Verhagen cited positive developments in Serbian efforts to apprehend war criminals. Ard van der Vorst, MFA Coordinator for Political Affairs for the Western Balkans, told Post on November 13 that the FM was responding to parliamentary questions about how he would react to new information. According to Van der Vorst, the FM said that if the Serbs do "all they can," the FM will rethink his position. Asked if the Dutch would still wait for ICTY Prosecutor Brammertz to cite "full cooperation" by Serbia, Van der Vorst said Brammertz "will never say full cooperation." However, the news from Belgrade and Brammertz' office has been "enthusiastic" about Serbian efforts. Asked if the Dutch reaction was a change of position, Van der Vorst first said the Netherlands was "easing" its position, then retracted that phrase and said the Dutch were being "constructive." Van der Vorst repeated his request for the FBI report on Serbian efforts to find the fugitive Mladic (reftel).

(COMMENT: Our understanding is that the Dutch would welcome news of positive efforts by Serbia in order to support a decision to agree to EU consensus on closer ties with Serbia.

END COMMENT.)
LEVIN